



AAC AND AT

Augmentative and Alternative Communication & Assistive Technology

Podcast with CJay Smith



Key takeaways and top tips

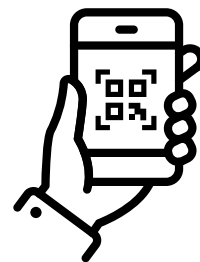


Main Messages

- AAC/AT is anything that assist someone when they need some support.
- AAC/AT promotes independence and autonomy.
- The right communication tools can boost confidence and break the communication barrier.
- Communication needs to be accessible.
- Technology can be low – mid – or high tech.
- The technology used will need to be matched to the needs of the person using it.
- Multiagency support is helpful. – SLT/OT
- It's important to be flexible in our approach to how someone uses AAC/AT.
- The device should be available whenever it is needed.
- The device should never be used as a reward

Ideas

- Simple QR codes on a lanyard can be used to support AAC needs e.g.: Gestalts/favourite songs or clips from a movie for regulation.
- Badges or pins can show communication preferences.
- Graphics on clothing displaying interests and personality may assist in building connections.
- "Topics of interest" can support the other person to feel calm and regulated i.e.: dogs/cats.



Busting the Myths

- Screen time is not detrimental for all.
- The right level of technology will assist with regulation i.e.: specific shows, music, voice notes, SMR.
- Stimming on a device can often feel regulating and is valid.
- AT can support mental health as well as communication needs.
- AAC can support communication when anxiety is just too high.
- AAC/AT will not stop people from speaking.

Anxious About Using Technology?

- The approach to any AAC/AT support, needs to be a 360 one and embraced by all.
- Get the multiagency team involved and ask for help.
- Get to know what the person's needs and likes.
- Knowledge is power - Know who is out there to help.
- It is okay to use a mixture of different AAC/AT levels, we must be flexible.
- Personalize the device – favourite songs, photos and sounds.
- Celebrate the small wins and most importantly, **Have fun! And "keep communication real"**



Apps & Recommendations

- Lots of useful Apps – [TD Snap](#), [Grid AAC](#).
- Sensory and regulation apps – auditory/breathing and fidgets.
- Things don't have to coast the earth, shop around.
- Use function already accessible on your own smart phone i.e.; notes page.
- Keep a to-do-list
- Set reminders.
- Take pressure off yourself by using AT.

